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In the shadowy world of spy versus counterspy, the West has a major advantage: corruption in the Soviet system. Here are the stories of four brave men who repudiated their communist masters to work for freedom

BY JOHN
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Double Agents in a Secret War

— Oleg Lyalin —

DURING THE PAST 14 YEARS, Western nations have been safer and world peace has been more secure because of a Russian named Oleg Lyalin. Until now, his story has never been made public.

As a youth in a Soviet sports club, Lyalin became expert in hand-to-hand combat, and later an excellent marksman and parachutist. Inducted into the KGB, the lean,

dark-eyed Lyalin underwent prolonged examination by specialists, who judged him capable of killing for a cause. In seeking staff assassins, the KGB places great value on stability and patriotic idealism. Given his Marxist values, Lyalin was a moral and honest man—too much so, as it turned out.

In the early 1960s, at an airfield near the Baltic coast, the KGB caught two Jewish dissidents trying to flee in a small plane. They were

dragged off and stuffed into the bomb bay of a military aircraft. Pretending to take off, the pilot taxied the plane down the field, then revved the engines to a high pitch. The two dissidents were told that the plane was losing altitude and they had to be jettisoned. The bomb-bay doors were opened and the men fell a few feet to the ground beneath the stationary bomber. The psychological shock killed them both. Lyalin saw them literally frightened to death, and he never forgot.

Assigned to London in 1967 as a "trade representative," Lyalin witnessed corruption everywhere in the KGB Residency. In quest of career advantage, some officers regularly gave or took bribes and falsified reports. Others embezzled from operational funds to buy Western goods to sell on the Moscow black market. At the same time, Lyalin concluded that a free British society had better fulfilled its promises than had Marxism.

Finally something snapped, and Lyalin called a British official. After talking for hours with British intelligence, he agreed to serve as a British agent within the KGB. Over the ensuing months, Lyalin detailed elaborate KGB preparations to terrorize London, Washington, Paris, Bonn, Rome and other Western capitals. He was not talking about some theoretical wartime-contingency plan, but rather of a plan to commit widespread murder and mayhem in peacetime.

Lyalin had been ordered to select British politicians, journalists, academicians and businessmen for assassination. His KGB counterparts in the United States and Western Europe had drafted similar death lists. Soviet agents had then recorded the daily movements of the marked men so they could be quickly liquidated whenever Moscow ordered.

Officers of Department V, the KGB's assassination and sabotage apparatus, had also developed agent networks. Posing as messengers, deliverymen or tourists, agents were to enter government buildings and litter the corridors with tiny, colorless capsules. Crushed underfoot, the capsules would emit vapors fatal to anyone breathing them. And the more rescuers, the greater the fatalities and the terror.

To create more chaos, the KGB intended to infiltrate, by plane and submarine, squads of Soviet saboteurs to blow up power stations, bridges and rail junctions and to poison municipal-water supplies.

When the incredulous British demanded proof, Lyalin supplied it—sometimes in the form of KGB documents, sometimes leading them to his own agents.

To defuse the threat, on September 24, 1971, the British suddenly wiped out the KGB Residency in London, expelling 105 Soviet "diplomats." Then they announced Lyalin's defection.

These actions produced pande-